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Summaries in English

Is the officescape still up to date?

by Arno Lappat
(see page 21)

A good 15 years have gone by since the appearance of the first humanized officescapes in Western Europe. This development has also given rise to the new term "office landscape", now a firmly established terminus technicus in English. Proponents of the officescape are now less dogmatic than they were in the "pioneering" Sixties. Many have announced its demise, but the improved office landscape is continuing its triumphal march in Europe, in America and in Japan.

The newly zoned officescape

About three or four years ago a new large-space zoning system was developed on the basis of many different kinds of negative criticisms of the original scheme. The new scheme, to be sure, produces again rather more functional rigidity in plan, but it takes some of the kinks out of the traditional officescape and is better adapted to social requirments. Below, there are listed the most important additional demands made on the new type of officescape:

– Plans have to be selected in which large-space units with 50–60 or 100–120 work sites are to be created, of which, however, several units are to merge together.
– The large-space units themselves have to be spatially (i.e. elevation, core, ceiling) well structured, so that there are created for the individual employees finite areas that can be taken in at a glance.
– Optically effectual room height in the officescape should not be too great: approx. 2.70–2.80 m, possibly ranging between 2.60 and 3.0.
– Visual and acoustic improvement of the officescape by elimination of zones of heavy traffic, as well as all zones that deviate from the character of the general officescape.
– Thus there are formed on each officescape level 3 separated zones: a) The actual officescape (work sites and all areas closely connected therewith); b) The main traffic route with the main service core, etc., plus possible stairways; c) The special-purpose zone with, e.g., cloakrooms, toilets, lounges, conference rooms, reception rooms, utility rooms, etc.
– The large-space zone should be definitely inwardly oriented, the special zone outwardly, but each work site should command a view toward the outdoors.
– The zones should be acoustically and visually separate from one another, but felt to belong together owing to many internal accesses.
– Design in the officescape should be more interesting and make more impact.
– Environmental conditions should possibly be varied within the scope of admissible psychological limits.

Differentiated office planning in the future

It is apparent that in practice in the case of many new office building plans the schedule of requirements is being set up in a much more differentiated fashion. In addition to officescapes, variable numbers of individual office cells are integrated in the plans, and in many cases flexible buffer zones are provided betwen officescapes and office, cells, so as to permit the building, as it were, to "breathe". There has also emerged a variant of the office landscape, that is to say, the "group" or "team" office. A group office zone is understood to mean space units that in integrated fashion accommodate at least three "social" sub-groups, with maximum dimensions, which, taking a group of 7 as an ideal standard, means 15, 20 or 30 persons. This figure, namely, 25 to 35 persons, again, is the maximum size for a large-scale group working on a specific task. The prerequisite, to be sure, of such officescapes is that all the people working in them are doing equivalent jobs, which are familiar to everyone in the group. Then the noise generated, or the noise level produced, in the room, no longer has any particular significance, as this "routine noise" is familiar to all concerned. It is important for organizational reasons that several (at least 3) group units be spatially combined. Complete air-conditioning is desirable, and partial air-conditioning is necessary when there is a high degree of technical organization. Otherwise, the requirements that apply to the office landscape also apply here.

The result of all this is three kinds of spaces for office buildings:
1) The developed, newly zoned office landscape
2) The group office
3) The individual office cell (limited to 1 or 2, maximum 3, work sites)

In principle plans can be developed in three ways:

I Officescape – group office – office cell, rigid system

II Officescape – buffer zone – group office – buffer Zone – office cell, buffer sytem (flexible buffer zones separating two types of space)
III Office cell in group office in officescape, reversible system (all types of spaces integrated in a totally flexible area).

The latter space system permits free conversions among the three types of office unit: officescape, group office and conventional office cell.

Officescapes and conventional offices cannot be adapted to each other owing to the extreme difference in room heights (5 to approx. 20 m). This means that the plan has to be oriented to the minimum requirements of the officescape and that, in the case of conventional utilization, there is bound to occur a more or less sizeable interior shadow zone (as far as daylight illumination is concerned). Such an excess space expenditure (occurring, to be sure, only in the case of conventional utilzation) is the price that must be paid for reversibility.

Architects in the future will have to develop totally novel kinds of plan and building design to meet the demands of the kind of office buildings that will be required in the future. The technical installations of office buildings will have to be kept in line, both technically and economically, with this trend. Interior office planning can no longer be done, owing to its complexity, as a kind of sideline by architects or interested laymen, but only by first-class professionals in the specialized field of office design.

Translation by Dr. J. Hull

The administration centre of the C.D.C. at Ivry-sur-Seine

by Yona Friedman
(see page 34)

The majority of people, those who work for a living, spend much more time at their place of work, office or factory, than at home (not counting time reserved for sleep). That is why the humanization and the person, alization of the place of work is at least as important as that of the place of residence. Architects, and their clients, are devoting a great deal of effort to making the place of work attractive: office landscapes, factories in green zones, etc., are now common. However, another step forward must be taken; something very important is still missing: the personalization of the work site, a personalization that is imagined, selected, decided on by the employee himself. Up to the present time this personalization has been insufficiently carried out. The public does not see the difference between a building containing conventional offices and one that is planned by the people working in it. The extra expenditures entailed by the adaptation of the work site to the individual requirements of the employees do not, in general, appear to be justified in the eyes of business firms. Yet another difficulty seems to be insurmountable: if an office or a work site is personalized, what will happen when this office or work site is taken over by another occupant?

The problem of self-planning is very complex: the main thing is to make sure that employees can submit their proposals without being frowned on by management. Then, when they have realized that their proposals will be actually carried out, there begins a period of indecision, of hesitation; these are the same problems that arise in the planning of a home. The personalization of the work site appears impossible at the present time for reasons that are financial, technical and psychological.

The C.D.C. complex (Compagnie Dubonnet-Cinzano-Byrrh) at Ivry near Paris is an example of the application of the self-planning method. Let us examine the conditions existing at the outset. The C.D.C company has, at Ivry, a huge warehouse, built during the Twenties, and covering 2 hectares (70 000 m² of developed ground surface). This warehouse complex, after conversion, is to accommodate the Paris offices of the company and, at ground-floor level, all the warehouse facilities serving the Paris area. About 300 employees will work there.

The first step that had to be taken, in order to ensure that the work sites could be "personalized", was to make a technical choice: the transformation of the existing building into a "spatial infrastructure". After demolition of all interior walls and partitions, the building is transformed into an empty skeleton structure. Then the work sites are constructed on the floor decks of this infrastructure: light-weight pavilions, what could be called thermal envelopes. This these pavilions are constructed on a sort of "artificial site" in stories. Part of the floor decks are demolished to ensure daylight incidence on all levels and throughout the extent of the building. As for the empty surfaces between the pavilions. illuminated via light-wells piercing the ceilings, they are transformed into gardens. The construction of light-weight glazed pavilions on the floor decks and sheltered by the levels above is easy and low-cost. The fact that the roofs are suspended beneath the sheltering "umbrella" constituted by the floor deck above and that their panels carry no load makes it very easy to carry out later modifications, requiring only the assistance of a permanent maintenance team (2 men), who are enough to effect any needed changes. The process commenced with the distribution of a "manual of self-planning" to the C.D.C. personnel. I think that I have managed to give a very simple explanation of the process of architectural planning: the schemes showing the interconnections among the rooms, which represent the factor "generating constraints for others" and the "labelling", which represents the only aspect concerning the future occupant of a room. Then there are united labelled graphs representing "houses", and the manual demonstrates how a "house" "answers" to the personal comportment of its occupants. A very brief orien-

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tation course complementes the manual handed out to the personnel of the C.D.C.

The sequence of self-planning:

1st stage
Definition, in the infrastructure, of the "territories" placed at the disposal of each department.

2nd stage
First detailed plan (1:100). In each department decisions are taken respecting both the number and the type of rooms. In the rough plans of the self-planners, all the rooms are "personalized": their characteristics are determined by the future occupant. The architectural character of the plans of the different departments varies greatly. We have called the totality of rooms in each department (the pavilions) a "village". The way in which these "villages" is conceived offers a great advantage: the plan is not thought of as a puzzle, with rooms fitting inside one another; the shape, then, of a "village" or of a room does not necessarily depend on the shape of its neighbour.

3rd stage
Second detailed plan (1:100). Modifications and improvements – from the individual standpoint – in relation to the first plan.

4th stage
Third detailed plan (1:100). The changes as compared to the second plan stem from a desire for economy and for the reorganization of some of the departments. Once the final stage is reached, the outlines of the plan are traced out in chalk directly on the infrastructure, and this design (of natural size) is again checked by the employees, who draw in their final corrections before the commencement of construction.

Translation by Dr. J. Hull

Résumés en français

Actualité du bureau-paysage?

par Arno Lappat
(voir page 21)

La création des premiers bureaux-paysages humanisés en Europe occidentale remonte à une bonne quinzaine d'années déjà, ainsi que l'apparition de ce néologisme qui s'est fixé en tant que terme technique dans la langue anglo-américaine. Le dogme initial du bureau-paysage des années 60 a disparu. Malgré de nombreuses critiques, le bureau-paysage amélioré continue de s'implanter en Europe, en Amérique et au Japon.

Le bureau-paysage réaménagé
Sur la base des diverses expériences critiques, on a élaboré, il y a trois à quatre années environ, un nouveau schéma d'aménagement des bureaux-paysages qui, s'il apporte une plus grande rigidité fonctionnelle dans le plan, élimine notablement les nuisances du bureau-paysage traditionnel et tient davantage compte des exigences sociales des hommes. Les points qui suivront présentent les exigences supplémentaires les plus importantes:
– Il faut choisir des surfaces où on implantera des unités de 50–60 resp. 100–120 postes de travail, dont plusieurs unités doivent être en continuité.
– Les unités bureau-paysage elles-mêmes doivent être bien structurées du point de vue de l'espace (c'est-à-dire façade, noyau, plafond), pour que l'individu dispose d'espaces finis qu'il peut embrasser du regard.
– La hauteur visuelle de l'espace du bureau-paysage ne doit pas se situer trop haut: 2,70–2,80 m env.; éventuellement créer une différenciation des hauteurs entre 2,60 et 3,0 m.
– Elimination de perturbations visuelles et acoustiques dans l'espace par le déplacement des zones à forte circulation de même que de toutes les zones étrangères au caractère du bureau-paysage.
– Dans chaque étage à bureau collectif se forment donc 3 zones distinctes: a) La zone du bureau collectif proprement dite (postes de travail, installations spéciales pour groupe, surfaces pour discussions en groupes, toutes circulations secondaires); b) La circulation principale avec le noyau principal et le service d'étage central, éventuellement les escaliers d'étage; c) La zone spéciale avec par ex. vestiaires, toilettes, locaux de repos et de séances, salles de représentation, local d'entretien etc.
– La zone de bureau collectif devrait être orientée vers l'intérieur; la zone spéciale surtout vers l'extérieur. Chaque poste de travail devrait avoir vue sur l'extérieur.
– Les différentes zones doivent bénéficier d'une isolation visuelle et acoustique, mais être reliées par de nombreux accès afin de créer une impression d'ensemble.
– Un aménagement intérieur plus attrayant et plus stimulant.
– Eventuellement varier les conditions d'environnement dans le cadre des normes admissibles.

Planification de bureaux différenciée pour le futur
Dans la pratique il appert que pour de nombreuses conceptions de nouveaux immeubles administratifs, le programme des besoins est établi d'une manière beaucoup plus différenciée. Outre les bureaux collectifs, on intègre dans le plan un certain nombre de bureaux individuels; souvent on ménage des zones-tampons transformables entre les zones de bureaux collectifs et de bureaux individuels, afin de permettre la «respiration» du bâtiment. Le bureau d'équipes ou de groupes est une autre forme dérivée du bureau-paysage. Par la solution des bureaux pour groupes on entend des unités qui, reliées entre elles et largement dimensionnées, accueillent au moins trois mini-groupes «sociaux», soit avec un nombre idéal de 7 personnes par groupe (+ personnes) 15, 20 ou 30 personnes au total. Ce nombre, 25 à 30 personnes, représente le nombre maximal d'un grand groupe travaillant d'une manière déterminée. De tels bureaux ne sont possibles qu'à la condition que toutes les personnes effectuent des tâches assez similaires et connues par tous. Le bruit résultant ou plutôt le niveau acoustique régnant dans la salle n'est plus déterminant, puisque ce «bruit de travail» est familier à tous. Pour des raisons d'organisation, il importe que plusieurs unités (au minimum 3) soient placées en continuité. Une climatisation générale est désirable; une climatisation partielle absolument nécessaire pour des administrations à haut degré technique. Pour le reste, le bureau pour groupes doit remplir les mêmes conditions que le bureau-paysage.

Pour des planifications futures et pratiques d'immeubles administratifs il y a donc trois types de bureaux:

1) Le bureau-paysage redéveloppé et réaménagé en zones
2) Le bureau pour groupes
3) Le bureau individuel (limité à 1, 2, au maximum 3 postes de travail)

Les plans s'élaboreront en principe selon trois formes:

I Bureau-paysage – bureau pour groupes – bureau individuel, système rigide
II Bureau-paysage – zone-tampon – bureau pour groupes – zone-tampon – bureau individuel (zones-tampons flexibles entre deux types d'espaces)
III Bureau individuel dans le bureau pour groupes dans le bureau-paysage, système réversible (tous les types d'espaces sont intégrés dans une surface totalement transformable)

Ce dernier système représente, à son maximum, que les 3 types de bureaux (bureau-paysage, bureau pour groupes, bureau individuel) se laissent transformer à loisir par le plan général. Les bureaux collectifs et les bureaux traditionnels ne sont pas réversibles en raison de leurs profondeurs trop divergentes (5 m contre 20 m env.). Il faut donc planifier les surfaces en fonction des exigences minimales d'un bureau collectif. Avec une utilisation traditionnelle, il se crée, par rapport à la lumière naturelle, une plus ou moins grande zone d'ombre interne. Un tel surplus de surface (résultant uniquement d'une utilisation conventionnelle) est le «prix» de la réversibilité. Pour les plans et les programmes d'organisation d'immeubles administratifs tenant compte de l'avenir, les architectes devront élaborer des schémas de plan et des formes d'immeuble tout à fait nouveaux. La technique constructive doit sortir de sa léthargie afin de pouvoir suivre cette tendance, sur le plan technique et économique. L'aménagement intérieur des bureaux dans sa complexité ne pourra plus être entrepris à la légère, par des architectes ou des amateurs, mais uniquement par des professionnels de tout premier plan dans le domaine de la conception de bureaux.

Traduction par Bernd Stephanus